

Lack of a motto doesn't boost coin's value

By Roger Boye

Here are answers to more questions about coins and paper money.

Q—When were the words “In God We Trust” added to paper money? Are \$1 bills without the slogan rare?

W. R., Hickory Hills

A—The motto first appeared on silver certificates of series 1957, almost a century after it had made its debut on coins. The “collector value” of old currency is determined by series year, signature combinations and condition, rather than the lack of a motto.

Q—Is it still possible to order uncut sheets of currency from the federal government? If so, what's the cost? Can the bills be cut apart and spent?

H. J., Palatine

A—A sheet of four \$1 bills costs \$10.25 by mail; 16 bills, \$28; and 32 bills, \$47. Four \$2 bills cost \$14.75 and 16 bills, \$45. To order, send a money order or certified check for the exact amount to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Mail Order Sales, Room 602-11A, 14th and C Streets, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20228. You can spend the bills at any time.

Q—At a coin show I noticed that some Lincoln pennies cost much more than U.S. large cents

from the early 1800s. For example, a dealer wanted \$55 for a 1931-S Lincoln and just \$8 for an 1825 cent. How can something so old cost so little by comparison?

H. B., Oak Lawn

A—Rare-coin prices usually are determined by supply, demand and condition, not age. Uncle Sam made 1.5 million cents dated 1825, almost twice as many as the 1931-S. Lincoln cents are a much more popular

collectible than old large cents.

Q—You said in a recent column that most “new issues”—such as U.S. proof sets—have poor short-term profit potential. Why?

H. J., Park Forest

A—The initial public offering usually satisfies demand for a “new issue.” During the next few years, sellers of the item tend to outnumber fresh buyers, which keeps the resale price down.